
III. Impact on Gang-related Crime & Community Quality of Life

After living in Cypress Park so long, you know what to do when gunfire erupts. You lay low. You don't run outside. You peek out and pray no one will see you.

- Northeast Resident

The previous section dealt with the first elements in the CLEAR program's logic model: targeting and collaboration, including law enforcement and community engagement: pre-conditions for community recovery. This section deals with the posited effects of these collaborations: neighborhood safety from gangs, and neighborhood responsibility for quality of life, *both* consequences of law enforcement *and* community engagement.

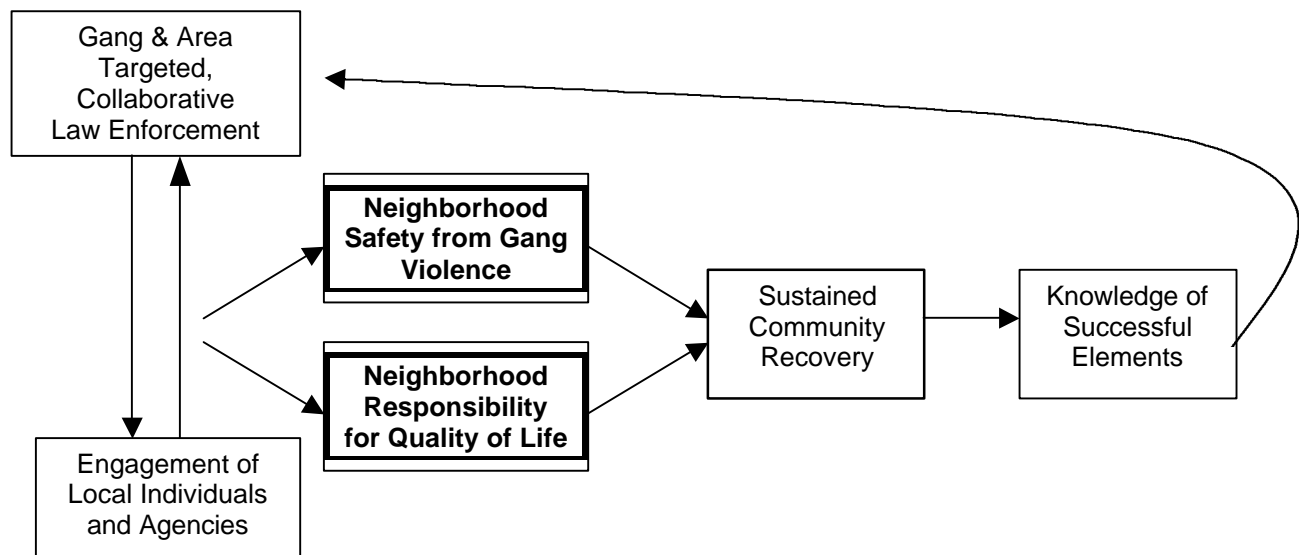


Figure III.1. The CLEAR Logic Model (Highlighting the First Sequence)

A fair amount of both qualitative and quantitative evidence has been gathered that addresses the CLEAR program's organizational, process and outcome objectives. As is typical with any evaluation, the results are mixed, including positive, negative and inconclusive outcomes.¹ *Interpretation of these findings must be made in the context of the program's early stage of implementation.*

¹ Three case study reports have been issued on the CLEAR program, each containing this kind of information.

As indicated, CLEAR is a pilot program, and this evaluation covers, essentially, only the first two phases of its operations. During this period, one site has been operational for 2½ years, one for 1½ years, and the third for one year only. Assessment of the program's impacts is also complicated by limitations of existing reporting systems for crime data and other relevant information (e.g., program costs). Confounding the issue of data adequacy is the identification of geographic areas that are adequate for analyses that can compare them with the CLEAR target areas. The primary, secondary and balance areas discussed in section I are used for that purpose, but have several limitations that are noted in the next section.

This is not to say that attempts to assess the program's impacts should not be made at this stage. *It only says that any assessment must be considered preliminary and that a definitive judgment of the program's ultimate effectiveness will require additional program implementation time as well as more complete data.*

Four categories of crime statistics are analyzed for this report:²

- Gang-related crime
- The resolution rate of gang homicides in target areas
- Violent felonies
- Nuisance activities by gangs – or a reasonable surrogate indicator

The latter two are discussed in this section under the topic of community quality of life, which, even more than lasting crime reduction, is considered a long-term goal of CLEAR.

A. Gang-Related Crime

To-date, CLEAR case study evaluation reports have concentrated on raw gang-related crime data, aggregated by program site, deployment area and calendar quarter. Analyses of changes in crime have been restricted to numeric comparisons that allow rough controls for pre-CLEAR versus program periods (and seasonality) and geographic area (see Attachment 9, Chart 1). This report presents a number of analyses that attempt to go beyond those earlier data treatments, including:

² The last three are specified in the legislation (Penal Code Section 14005) and BOC RFP.

- Calculations of 1-year moving averages that help smooth out the problem of instable data due to small numbers of crime (Table 9.a).
- Conversion of raw statistics into rates per 100,000 population and rates per square mile that permit more controlled comparisons across geographic areas (Table 9.b).
- Finer breakouts by type of gang-related crime, which reveal important differences by period, area and site – as well as the highly erratic nature of gang crime across a five-year period (Table 9.e).
- Calculations of crime reduction and related cost of crime (Table 9.f.) using statistical regression modeling, which is discussed in section IV of this report.

Over-interpretation of these data must be avoided. Data on reported gang crime are admittedly of poor reliability, an issue that is currently being addressed by the LAPD in connection with the department's relatively recent emphasis on crime mapping, tracking and strategic deployment. Second, as already noted, the numbers are too small to compare all but large aggregations. That is a necessary consequence of one of the basic elements of CLEAR's program design: the restriction of effort to small geographic areas and a specific category of crime (gang violence). Nonetheless, several conclusions can be drawn from these data, including:

1. **Moving Averages** (See Attachment 9.a). Compared with the pre-implementation period (the one year average just before implementation) gang-related crime shows a decrease in a primary target area only for Northeast CLEAR. Decreases were recorded for secondary areas in Foothill and Pacific, and for the balance of the Northeast LAPD area. The increases in gang crime at Foothill and Pacific CLEAR are, in these calculations, due entirely to large increases during the last quarter (July-September 1999). As shown in Attachment 9.e.2, this is largely due to a dramatic increase in reported gang assaults in Foothill, and assaults and robberies in Pacific.

A more statistically controlled analysis of crime reduction, using these moving averages, is presented below in Section IV.C and Attachment 9.f.2. The regression procedure used to estimate changes in crime is also the basis for estimating crime costs. The conclusions from that analysis are that statistically significant reductions in gang crime are occurring largely in Northeast and Pacific CLEAR target areas and not in Foothill.³

2. **Crime Rates** (Table 9.b). This table of population and geographic area rates is strikingly revealing: in all cases, primary areas have substantially higher gang crime rates per 100,000 population *and* per square mile than either the secondary

³ The strengths and weaknesses of that analysis are examined in Section IV, along with a discussion of the characteristics of each target area, and their comparison areas, and their effects on the analysis of crime reduction.

or balance areas.⁴ Furthermore, both of these rates for secondary areas are substantially higher than those for the balance areas.⁵

Looking at changes from pre-program to program periods (shown in the following table), primary area gang crime rates decreased most in the Northeast site. For secondary areas the largest decreases are in Pacific; the balance areas show modest and mixed results across sites. (Tests for crime changes within each site are discussed in the next section.)

Table III-1. Changes in Gang Crime Rates for Each Site and Area

	Primary Area		Secondary Area		Balance of Area	
	Avg per 100,000	Avg per Sq Mi	Avg per 100,000	Avg per Sq Mi	Avg per 100,000	Avg per Sq Mi
Northeast						
Pre-Program (13 Qtrs)	99.54	16.31	61.03	7.26	39.10	4.11
Program (10 Qtrs)	70.78	11.59	57.83	6.88	33.14	3.48
Change Pre- to Program:	-28.76	-4.71	-3.20	-0.38	-5.96	-0.63
Foothill						
Pre-Program (17 Qtrs)	75.49	10.54	61.08	6.44	25.05	1.15
Program (6 Qtrs)	62.96	8.79	51.46	5.43	21.21	0.98
Change Pre- to Program:	-12.52	-1.75	-9.62	-1.01	-3.84	-0.18
Pacific						
Pre-Program (19 Qtrs)	79.05	15.94	28.77	4.24	12.88	1.12
Program (4 Qtrs)	74.38	15.00	10.93	1.61	14.05	1.22
Change Pre- to Program:	-4.67	-0.94	-17.84	-2.63	1.17	0.10

3. **Type of Gang Crime** (Table 9.e). Gang crime-related data are fairly scattered by type of crime, with two major exceptions: robberies and assaults with a deadly weapon. These two categories predominate, to different degrees, in all sites and areas. Because of the small numbers for primary areas, statistical comparisons have not been made across areas by type of crime.
4. **Regression Estimates** (Table 9.f.2). Using multivariate regression to control for comparison areas and estimate total pre-program versus during-program differences in gang-related crime produces results similar to the above findings based on “eyeballing” moving averages. Using moving averages (but not raw data), Northeast and Pacific CLEAR show statistically significant crime reductions in primary (and combined) target areas. No significant reduction is found for Foothill CLEAR. (This is discussed further later in this section and in the next section as well.)

⁴ These findings confirm the criteria used by CLEAR to select target areas.

⁵ Note that these rates are unchanged when based on moving averages rather than raw data.

Three important cautions should be kept in mind that apply to these and other quantitative analyses of program outcomes:

1. The designation of primary, secondary and balance (of the LAPD district) areas (see Section I, above) is based on reporting district boundaries set by each CLEAR site Operations Team. In reality, and depending on the CLEAR site and time period, these boundaries are quite rough. In two cases they have even changed slightly over the program period. More importantly, the deployment of law enforcement resources – which must be reactive as well as proactive – has not always been most concentrated in the primary area. The secondary area is thus somewhat contaminated as a true “comparison area” for these analyses.⁶
2. The determination of “implementation date” is not exact. It is based only in part on grant specifications, particularly for Phase I. The evaluators, from discussions with CLEAR executives and staff, have specified points in time (quarters) where staffing was fairly complete, facilities and equipment were at least minimally sufficient and the Operations Team had seemed to begin to gel across departmental boundaries. Resetting these dates would of course change the calculations of differences in crime that reference the period before program implementation.
3. The analysis of simple changes in moving averages, while an improvement over the use of raw numbers, does not in itself provide for two important statistical controls: 1) the comparison of target with non-target areas; and 2) the general comparison of the pre-program and post-program (i.e., *during* program) periods.⁷ The regression procedure discussed in the next section (and mentioned above in #4, page 27) attempts to remedy those shortcomings.

B. Gang-related Homicides

AB 853 specifies that this evaluation describe the extent to which CLEAR has accomplished “a 5 percent increase in the resolution rate of gang homicides in the target area.” (Requirements for data regarding violence and nuisance activities are noted later in this section.) To address this requirement, LAPD and District Attorney staff at the three Phase II CLEAR sites were asked to supply data on gang homicides that occurred during the year prior to program implementation and each of the first two years (as

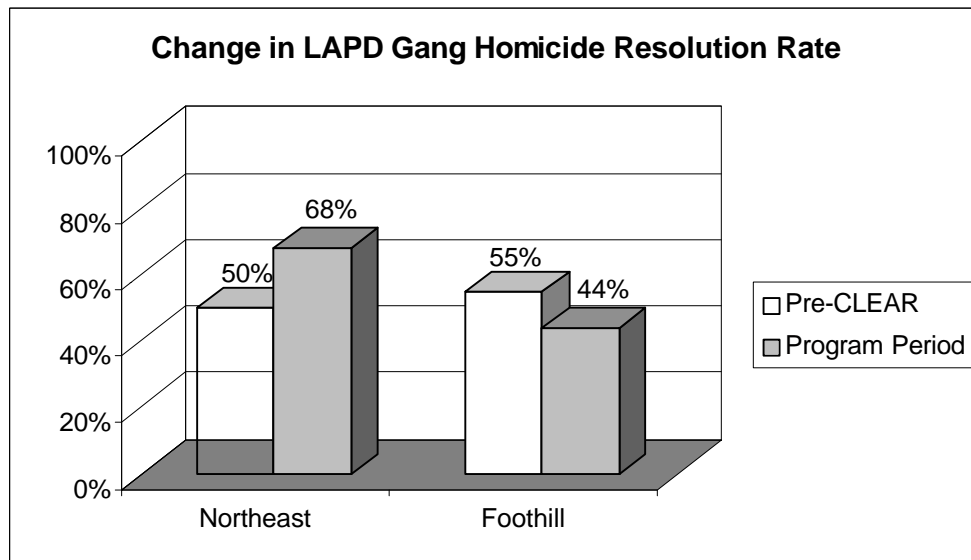
⁶ In addition, it must be kept in mind that “other things being equal” – an ideal requirement of true experimental design – is not the case in any of these comparison areas. Not only are there important cultural and historical differences in gang activity, the population densities are dramatically different from the balance areas, as shown in Attachment 9.

⁷ Using the one-year average for the year just prior to program implementation, as is done in Table 9.a, does not fully accomplish this.

feasible) of program activity. Findings are shown in Attachment 9 (Table 9.g) and summarized here:

1. Gang homicide data from Northeast CLEAR are most complete (3 full years) as well as most supportive of an increase in resolution rates by the LAPD – a 5% increase in the first year and 33% increase in year two. In addition, Northeast gang homicides took increasingly shorter periods of time (from 100 to 39 to 10 days) to reach resolution by the LAPD.⁸ DA resolution (conviction) rates – based on much smaller numbers, were similar for the prior and first years, dropping in year two.
2. The picture at Foothill CLEAR is quite different: LAPD resolution rates decreased by 5% during the first year, and processing time increased. DA resolutions – based on *very* small numbers – decreased somewhat in the first program year.
3. Pacific CLEAR experienced far fewer homicides and no resolutions are yet reported by the LAPD or DA.

The following chart illustrates changes in the LAPD resolution rates for Northeast and Foothill CLEAR, the two sites for which sufficient data are available:



Again, these numbers are relatively small and therefore resolution percentages can change substantially with re-categorization of only one or two cases. In addition, some

⁸ To achieve more reliable sample sizes, primary and secondary areas have been combined.

resolutions take an extended period of time, which would be reflected in later analyses of these same homicides.

Perhaps the most important qualification on these data is that they represent incomplete resolution activities, not final determinations by the District Attorney or the courts. Lodestar is collecting this additional information for its continuing evaluation of CLEAR through Phase III. Given the often-lengthy time needed to take these cases through the courts, much better resolution data will be available after another year. No data are available at this time for comparisons of resolution rates with non-CLEAR areas.

C. Quality of Life Impacts

As depicted in the CLEAR logic model, neighborhood safety and quality of life are both important outcomes for the CLEAR program. Quality of life is, of course, more difficult to measure directly, partly because it is more difficult to define. It may also take a longer period of time to develop. Three “indicators” have been selected for this report – one qualitative, two quantitative – that may help gauge whether local improvements in quality of life are yet detectable in the CLEAR program areas.

1. Community Member Reports

In the discussion about community collaboration (page 22, above), it is noted that Foothill CIT members express the belief that the CLEAR program is making a positive difference in their quality of life. The Foothill CIT focus group, conducted in October 1999 (see Attachment 8), elicited a number of verbal and written comments about the neighborhood being cleaner, having less crime and having a better sense of community. One member commented that the changes included less fear of police. Members noted that there was more to accomplish but that it was now more evident as to how to proceed. Some also noted that the neighborhood would be better off if more people were informed about the CLEAR program, and involved.

Other measures of quality of life impacts are needed. A survey of a cross-section of community members or community leaders was beyond the scope of this evaluation, and

perhaps a bit premature, at least for Foothill.⁹ Changes in property values might be a useful longer-term indicator, although the *perception* of decreases in gang activity, safer streets and improvements in police-community relations would be more to the point.

2. Violence

The general level of personal violence may be seen as an indirect indicator of quality of life in that such crimes are highly “visible” to a community. Any significant decreases in reported violent crimes may be linked to perceptions that the community is less vulnerable to such attacks.

AB 853 asks for a description of the extent to which CLEAR has accomplished “a 5 percent decrease in violent felonies within the target area.” This is addressed by looking at violent Part I crime in the CLEAR areas, not restricted to the determination that they are gang-related (although many of them are so designated and therefore found in the gang-related crime analyses). The Part I crimes included are robbery, rape, murder and aggravated assault.

A graph depicting changes in the raw data for these Part I crimes is found in Attachment 9.2. Findings paralleling those for gang-related crime discussed above are found in Tables 9.c and 9.d, including:

1. Table 9.c. Except for the Northeast secondary area, these violent Part I crimes decreased in all target areas by much more than 5% – from a 12% decrease in the Foothill Primary area to 61% in the Pacific secondary area. However, compared with the pre-implementation period these decreases are stronger for the balance area than for target areas. Thus, while the targeted decrease appears to have been achieved, it is difficult to ascribe it specifically to the CLEAR program.¹⁰
2. Table 9.d. The same striking conclusion that applied to gang crime population and geographic rates is found for violent Part I crime: in all cases, primary areas have substantially higher violent Part I crime rates per 100,000 population *and* per square mile than either the secondary or balance areas. Furthermore, both of

⁹ Community leaders will be surveyed in the continuing evaluation.

¹⁰ Using raw data, the LAPD reports (lapdonline.com) that Part I crimes decreased city-wide by 7.6% this year.

these rates for secondary areas are substantially higher than those for the balance areas.¹¹

The same cautions about study areas (primary, secondary and balance) and implementation dates apply to these Part I analyses as to the gang crime analyses.

3. Nuisance Activities

Finally, AB 853 asks about the extent to which CLEAR has accomplished “a 5 percent decrease in nuisance activities by gangs in the target area.” Decreases in nuisance activities are reported by CIT members and by LAPD and CA members of the site Operations Teams. As remarked by the CLEAR Deputy City Attorney at a recent program-wide operation meeting, “CIT members used to complain about gang nuisance; now they complain about too many yard sales.”

Unfortunately, this kind of impact is difficult to capture quantitatively. Unlike gang crime data, the LAPD does not specially code nuisance activities for gang involvement. In addition, arrest statistics for certain specific categories of public disorder (e.g., drunkenness, disturbing the peace, disorderly conduct), apart from not being gang coded, are not available at the Reporting District level, precluding CLEAR area comparisons. As an alternative to a direct measure of gang nuisance activity – and to at least profile the study areas - two *indirect* quantitative indicators of changes in *general* nuisance activities were explored: 1) total Part II arrests, and 2) misdemeanor arrests and releases from custody (RFCs) in the CLEAR areas.

(a) Part II Arrests

Part II crimes include robbery, burglary, auto theft, narcotics violations, prostitution, drunkenness and other non-violent crimes. Statistics regarding Part II crime arrests might be considered a rough measure of general (including gang) nuisance behavior, which should decrease over time in neighborhoods that experience improved quality of life.

Reporting District-level data on Part II arrests, over the same period analyzed for gang-related and violent Part I crime, were obtained from the LAPD. The following table shows

¹¹ Note that these rates are unchanged when based on moving averages rather than raw data.

total and average arrests, pre-CLEAR and during CLEAR, for each of the three study areas within each of the three CLEAR sites:

Table III.2. Average Part-II Arrests per Quarter

	Program Period		Change	Signif. (.05)
	Prior	During		
Northeast				
Target*	44.9	51.0	6.1	No
Balance	1,410.9	1,787.8	376.9	no
Foothill				
Target*	101.8	72.1	-29.7	yes
Balance	2,127.9	2,177.7	49.7	no
Pacific				
Target*	122.2	158.1	35.9	yes
Balance	1,759.2	1,984.2	224.9	no

*Primary + Secondary areas

Findings for this analysis are mixed and inconclusive. It appears that significant (statistically detectable) change occurred only in Foothill and Pacific target areas (primary plus secondary combined), and not in Northeast. Inexplicably, Part II arrests *decreased* at Foothill CLEAR, but *increased* at Pacific. If Part-II arrests should decrease in the long run at every CLEAR site, this did not happen at the longest-existing site (Northeast). Because this is only an indirect measure of nuisance activity, much less gang nuisance activity, the analysis will not be pursued further. However, these type of data may warrant a second look, and a more refined analysis, after CLEAR has been in operation for several years.

(b) Misdemeanors and Releases from Custody

In order to approximate this kind of content, data were obtained from the LAPD on misdemeanor arrests and releases from custody (RFCs) in the CLEAR areas. Attachment 9.h presents data available at this time for Northeast and Foothill sites. (Data are not available for Pacific.) For the Northeast program (most complete data):

1. Decreases from pre-program to the first year program period, for the primary area, are found in two of the four quarters for misdemeanor arrests and three of four quarters for RFCs. Overall, there is not a 5% decrease.
2. Decreases for the second program year are more pronounced in the aggregate, but occur for only the first quarter for both misdemeanor arrests and RFCs.

In general, no quantitative data are shown to support decreases in gang nuisance activity. Other measures of quality of life impacts are needed for a comprehensive assessment of the CLEAR Program. A survey of a cross-section of community members or community leaders was beyond the scope of this evaluation, and would be premature, particularly for the Foothill site.¹² Changes in property values might be a useful longer-term indicator, although the *perception* of decreases in gang activity, safer streets and improvements in police-community relations would be more to the point.

¹² Community leaders will be surveyed in the continuing evaluation.

